

Toronto Restricts Academic Freedom: ‘Israeli Apartheid Week’ Not Permitted to Take Place

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

Global Research, March 11, 2010

[Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#) 8 March 2010

Region: [Canada](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Religion](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Toronto – Last week, Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Director of Education Chris Spence announced in a statement that “‘Israeli Apartheid Week’ and its activities are not permitted to take place on school or Board property, or as part of any activity under the jurisdiction of the TDSB.” Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) considers this announcement a clear attempt to discourage rational discussion of the constellation of issues addressed by Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), and therefore considers it an unacceptable restriction on the academic freedom that should be enjoyed by the TDSB’s community.

Spence’s announcement came on the heels of a motion on IAW introduced by Thornhill MPP Peter Shurman which condemned the use of the term Israeli Apartheid Week; that motion was passed by 30 members of the Ontario Legislature on February 25. Shurman’s motion had no legal weight, and stopped short of actually urging that IAW activities themselves be prohibited. Spence’s statement, however, went further by prohibiting IAW activities at TDSB schools. It thereby limits the discussion of Middle East issues – of vital interest to TDSB students and their families and meriting informed and open debate – within public education institutions.

“This is a disturbing precedent on several counts,” notes CJPME President Thomas Woodley. “First, however, singling out IAW activities and prohibiting them at TDSB schools or properties restricts freedom of expression, thereby violating Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” CJPME believes that limiting discussion on Israeli institutions of apartheid – institutions well-documented by human rights organizations and internationally respected figures – will only exacerbate the sense of frustration felt by many Torontonians who disagree with many actions of the Israeli government and its institutions. Spence’s decision appears to have been reached without public consultation or even a full and open debate by TDSB trustees. “The TDSB trustees need to insist that the right to freedom of expression be respected in TDSB schools,” continued Woodley. “Singling out IAW activities and censoring them is counterproductive with respect to both the intents and principles of our educational institutions,” concluded Woodley.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is one of many organizations which have catalogued some of the numerous manifestations of Apartheid in Israel. These include racially-based family reunification laws, racially-based municipal development practices, racially-based approval of building permits, non-recognition of Palestinian villages, racially-based inequalities for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and discriminatory policing of

Palestinian citizens of Israel. Many Israeli human rights organizations are at the forefront in terms of documenting such practices, and scores of these practices have been highlighted in highly public reports, including the Israeli Or Commission of 2003.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is a non-profit and secular organization bringing together men and women of all backgrounds who labour to see justice and peace take root again in the Middle East. Its mission is to empower decision-makers to view all sides with fairness and to promote the equitable and sustainable development of the region.

For more information, please contact:
Grace Batchoun
Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
Telephone: (514) 745-8491
[CJPME Email](#) – [CJPME Website](#)

The original source of this article is [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)
Copyright © [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#), [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#), 2010

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **[Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca